

LITERARY NOTES.

The Harpers will soon bring out Professor John Nichols' "Carlyle," a new volume in the "English Men of Letters" series. No volume has been published in this series since '87.

Mr. Hall Caine thinks that the most noticeable thing about modern fiction is its lack of invention. "Its observation," he says, "is very remarkable indeed. Pictures of manners, descriptions of scenes, reproductions of local dialects, these are quite wonderful in the novels of to-day. Perhaps there never was a time when the secondary qualities of English fiction stood so high. But except in a few instances, invention, its very best quality, does not stand high, and passion is not great in it. The selfsame story is told ten thousand times; the same characters are used to develop it, and the same motives inspire it. The spirit of modern fiction, he is "sorry to say," is cynicism. "There must be something in the spirit of the time," he adds, "which answers or appeals to it, and that partly, of course not entirely, accounts to me for the success of some modern books. Don't take things too seriously; laugh if you can at most solemn matters; if you don't laugh try to sneer, but do it merrily and slyly. That is the only message which too much writing is 'so hard hidden down.' But to take no higher view it's a poor sort of policy. Cynicism is like envy, the blight of genius. Good work has never lived with it and never will. It can not last, either. The big heart of the world is like the heart of a babe—as simple and as easily touched, but only by sentiment—honest, healthy sentiment. I know there is a little band of able younger writers to whom that word is like the red rag to the bull. They call it 'bleating' and heaven knows what else, and try to escape from the fable by flinging into a sort of frantic paganism that sits on them rather strangely. Their splendid energy is thrown away—they need not be in a hurry. As Mr. Buchanan says: 'There is no sentiment in literature in these days to fly away from. I wish there were. We could very well do with more of the spirit of Dickens.'

Balzac's habits when in the fever of authorship were strange ones. For months at a stretch he would go to bed at 7 in the evening, be called at 4 a.m., write till 8, bed again till 9:30; after a light meal write till 4 p.m., see a few friends, and take a bath or go out; then dine, and then bed.

Mr. Frank R. Stockton has written a ghost story under the suggestive title of "The Philosophy of Relative Existences." It is to appear in the next number of "The Century."

The experiences of Mr. Bigelow and Mr. Remington in Russia are to be described—with illustrations—in forthcoming numbers of "Harper's."

F. D. Millet's series of papers describing his long canoe voyage down the Danube will be concluded in the August "Harper." They have been collected in a volume and this the Harpers will publish immediately. It will contain the illustrative drawings made during the voyage by Mr. Millet and Mr. Alfred Parsons.

Several proofsheets of Wordsworth's poems, including some of "The Excursion," have just been sold in London. In some of them are important alterations made by the poet's hand.

Mr. Pinero's farce, "The Cabinet Minister," fills a clearly printed volume of 188 pages, published by the John W. Lovell Company. This piece was originally acted in London, at the St. James Theatre, with the brilliant and comical Mrs. John Wood in a conspicuous part. In New-York it was performed at Daly's Theatre. The humor of it is satirical, and the humorous satire is directed against conventionality, vulgarity, extravagance, artificial life; the affection of a love for Nature and the affection of plausibility. The author wished to indicate simplicity and sincerity in well-doing, and he has sought to attain his object by casting good-tempered ridicule, in easy, pungent dialogue, upon social forces and individual characteristics that are detrimental to a right standard of life.

New Publications.

EIGHTEENTH EDITION, 1882, for 25c, or stamp. **THE HUMAN HAIR.** Why it Falls Off; The Hair and the Remedies. By Prof. HARLEY PARKER, A. M. LONG & CO. 1,013 Archest, Phila. "Every one should read this little book."—Atmosphere.

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